

**Selectivity of
4-H, FFA, and FHA Membership:
A Study of
Factors Associated with
Rural Youths' Participation**



FFA P. 3

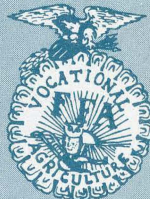


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FOREWORD

This study was an outgrowth of Southern Regional Project S-48, (N.C. 164), "Educational and Vocational Goals of Rural Youth in North Carolina." It is a contribution from the School of Home Economics, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and the North Carolina Agricultural Experiment Station, Raleigh. Financial support, in part, was made through a grant from the Research Council, University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

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**Selectivity of 4-H, FFA, and FHA Membership:
A Study of Factors Associated with Rural Youths' Participation**

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OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

The objective of this study was to determine the extent to which ninth and tenth grade rural youth joined or dropped out of 4-H Club, Future Farmers of America, and Future Homemakers of America, and some of the background components associated with their choices. Ninth and tenth grade youth, 4,500, were selected at random from rural schools all over the state.

It was found that: (1) About one-half of the rural boys surveyed were members of FFA. Whether boys joined or dropped FFA was consistently related to their age, grade, family's size, and level of living background. Family intactness was not associated with their decisions; (2) Approximately fifty percent of the girls surveyed were FHA members. Grade and level of living were the components most consistently related to girls' choices, followed by age, their residence, and family's size; (3) Approximately nineteen percent of the rural boys and twenty-two percent of the rural girls were 4-H members. Residence was the only component consistently related to boys' and to girls' 4-H choices. Generally, both boys' and girls' choices were related to their grade level. Age was of little importance in boys' 4-H decisions, as were their family's size and intactness. Girls' family's size, intactness, and level of living were not related to their 4-H choices; and (4) Few rural youth joined two of these organizations. Residence, age, and level of living were most consistently related to boys' joint membership choices. Those components most consistently related to girls' decisions to join two clubs were residence, grade, and level of living.

**SELECTIVITY OF 4-H, FFA AND FHA MEMBERSHIP:
A STUDY OF FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH RURAL YOUTHS'
PARTICIPATION**

During recent years concern has been expressed over rural youths' lack of purpose regarding their educational and vocational aspirations and expectations. In an effort to enlighten rural youth in terms of job opportunities and requirements, several youth organizations have incorporated into their programs units pertaining to careers. These organizations include: 4-H Clubs, Future Farmers of America, and Future Homemakers of America. The first two organizations were designed primarily for rural youth. Although each organization is unique in many respects and seeks to fulfill certain needs of youth, all programs encourage personal growth of skills, achievement, and the ability to work well with adults as well as with the peer group. Leaders of these youth organizations are interested in the educational and vocational goals of their members. It is probable that this interest has fostered specific interests and higher levels of goals among members of their organizations. Southern Regional Project S-48 (N.C. H-164), "Educational and Vocational Goals of Rural Youth in North Carolina," now nearing completion and from which these data were taken, attempted to ascertain member-nonmember differences in youths' expectations and aspirations.

Leaders and sponsors of these organizations are likewise interested in the characteristics of youth electing to join their clubs as compared to those of nonmembers and drop outs. A number of states have conducted research on the nature of the 4-H Club member and his re-enrollment, but only a few attempts have been made to compare members and nonmembers of this organization. Few efforts, if any, have been made to compare members and nonmembers of Future Homemakers of America or Future Farmers of America. No studies attempting to determine the characteristics of those youth holding simultaneous membership in Future Homemakers or Future Farmers and 4-H Club have been observed by these investigators. The present study was an effort to provide a more comprehensive overview of the extensiveness and the nature of the ninth and tenth grade membership of these organizations in the rural areas of North Carolina. Unique to this investigation was the use of area comparisons within the state. It was the purpose of this study to determine the relationship between the variables of grade, age, sex, residence, level of living, family size, and family intactness and: (1) youths' membership status in Future Homemakers of America, Future Farmers of America, and 4-H Club; and (2) the status of youths' simultaneous membership in these organizations.

PREVIOUS STUDIES

Several earlier studies have compared 4-H members and non-members. Anderson and Fales compared members with nonmembers in relation to several sociological factors (1). They found that members and nonmembers did not vary in age, but that members were more likely to live in better land class areas, and to come from families having a higher level of living background than nonmembers' families. This observation substantiated an earlier finding by Joy and Crile (2). Anderson and Fales' study also revealed that farm youth who were members of the 4-H Club belonged to more organizations than nonmembers.

Lindstrom and Dawson investigated the influences behind youths' choices to become and to remain 4-H Club members (3). They found that boys who had an appreciation for farm life were attracted to this organization to a greater extent than were those lacking this attitude. Size of family was not related to membership status in 4-H Club. Kreitlow, Pierce, and Middleton compared school and home background of members and nonmembers (4). They found with the variables of socio-economic status, number of organizations to which parents belong, farm size of those living on farms, and the number of dairy cows owned by the father of those living on farms, significant differences were in favor of those youngsters who were 4-H Club members. Family size was of no statistical significance in this study. In a rather comprehensive review of the literature, Kreitlow and associates found the following components most frequently associated with youths' remaining in 4-H Clubs and the predictability of their re-enrollment: (1) enrollment at the first eligible age, (2) family backgrounds favoring successful performance of membership expectations, (3) parental participation and interest in the 4-H Club program, (4) the joining or re-enrollment of siblings or peer groups, and (5) a record of previous active 4-H participation. Neither sex nor membership in other youth organizations was associated with drop outs or re-enrollment.

PROCEDURES FOLLOWED

This study was concerned with student data collected from a population of approximately 8,500 ninth and tenth grade students from fifty-two rural schools representing the Coastal, Piedmont, and Mountain areas of North Carolina. Schools were selected at random from a population characterized by the following criteria: County system schools that (1) had chapters of Future Farmers of America or Future Homemakers of America, and (2) were not located within the corporate limits of cities with 50,000 or more population. Demographic data were acquired through information sheets administered to all ninth and tenth grade students in the selected schools. Later, these data served as a basis for the selection of a student sample for the regional study.

For purposes of this study, 4,500 student information sheets were selected at random from the school population; 1,500 from each of the three areas of the state. Data included on the sheets were: age; grade; sex; membership status in 4-H Club, Future Farmers of America, or Future Homemakers of America; residence; family size; and family intactness. The latter part of the schedule incorporated questions concerning certain socio-economic characteristics of the family. The instrument used here was an adaptation of the *Cornell Scale of Level of Living* (5). This scale measures one component of socio-economic status, namely, level of living.

Information sheets were classified according to the students' membership status in each of the selected organizations. These classifications formed the control variables and they included: membership, nonmembership, and previous membership in: (1) Future Homemakers of America, Future Farmers of America, or 4-H Club; and (2) Future Homemakers of America and 4-H Club, or Future Farmers of America and 4-H Club. Youth were classified as members if they were presently associated with one or more of the organizations. Previous membership, or dropped membership, was defined as a classification in which a student had at one time belonged to one or more of the organizations but was not presently a member. Youth having never belonged to one or more of the organizations were classified as nonmembers. Demographic variables were broken down into the following classifications: Age—13-14, 15-16, 17-18 year groups; Grade—ninth grade, tenth grade; Residence—farm, open country, town, city; Family size—1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or more child families; Family intactness—yes and no categories (this item referred to whether the student lived with both parents); and Level of living—high, middle, or low groups.

Data were processed on a general purpose digital computer using a questionnaire analysis program employing Chi square tests of independence. Only those variables found to be statistically significant at the .05 level and beyond are reported.

FINDINGS

Note: Throughout this bulletin, the terms *membership status* and *membership choices*, used interchangeably, denote members, previous members, and nonmembers and should be distinguished from *membership*, which refers to members only.

Membership Status in Future Farmers of America: As shown in Table 1, frequency of membership in FFA was found to vary somewhat over the state. A higher percent of Coastal youth, 59.3, than boys from other areas, participated. Approximately one-half of the Piedmont youth

surveyed had never belonged to this organization. Less participation was observed among those from the Mountain area. Approximately thirty percent of the boys from each area of the state had dropped membership in FFA chapters.

Table 1. Boys' Membership Status in Future Farmers of America

Area	Members		Previous Members		Non Members	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Coastal N = 742	440	59.3	23	3.1	279	37.6
Piedmont N = 767	370	48.2	25	3.3	372	48.5
Mountain N = 672	276	41.1	20	3.0	376	56.0

Age was associated with the membership status of rural boys in North Carolina. Membership in FFA was more frequent among those from 15-18 years of age. Approximately one-half to three-fourths of Coastal Plains youth in all age groups were members; 39.1 percent of the 13-14 year old boys from the Piedmont area held membership. Approximately fifty percent of the boys in the 15-16 and 17-18 year age groups from this area were members. Nearly one-third of the 13-14 year olds from the Mountain area were members as compared to approximately forty-seven percent of the 15-16 and 17-18 year olds. It was observed that among all three areas of the state, most boys who joined FFA tended to remain in this organization during the age period covered.

Boys' *grade level* was found to be significantly related to their membership status; however, membership was not any more frequent among ninth grade than among tenth grade students. A relationship was observed between grade and membership status of Coastal Plains boys; 59.5 percent of ninth grade boys were FFA members; 58.9 percent of tenth grade boys held membership. The membership status of Piedmont boys was associated with their grade level; 44.9 percent of the ninth grade and 52.0 percent of the tenth grade students were members. A relationship was likewise observed between membership status and grade level of Mountain area boys; 40.6 percent of ninth grade boys were members; and 41.8 percent of those in the tenth grade held membership.

Rural boys' FFA membership status was found to be associated with their *place of residence*. As might be expected, significantly larger numbers

of farm boys were members of FFA than boys from other places of residence. Approximately eighty percent of the boys residing on farms in the Coastal Plains and Piedmont areas were members. The largest notable group of FFA members residing in town and cities was found in the Coastal Plains; 32.4 percent and 14.5 percent, respectively. In the Mountain area, 67.7 percent of farm youth were members. As the place of residence became less ruralized, sharp decreases in membership were noted for all areas.

Family size was observed as a significant component in the FFA membership status of rural boys from each of the three areas of the state. Membership was more frequent among boys from four, five, or more child families than those from smaller family sizes. This observation was notable in the Coastal Plains where 71.8 percent of the boys from families with 5 or more children, as contrasted to 41.9 percent of those from one child families, were members.

Whether rural boys in North Carolina lived with both of their parents was not significantly related to their membership status in FFA.

Level of Living was of significance in the FFA membership status of rural youth. Higher percentages of boys from the low level of living category were members than others. Boys from the middle and high level of living backgrounds tended to join FFA at the same approximate rate in the Coastal Plains and Piedmont areas. The highest percent of non-members, 67.7 was observed among Mountain youth representing high level of living backgrounds.

Membership Status in Future Homemakers of America: As indicated in *Table 2*, approximately sixty percent of the girls surveyed in the Coastal Plains and Piedmont areas were members of FHA. The smallest amount of participation was observed among girls from the Mountain area; 40.0 percent. Statewide drop out rates were negligible.

Table 2. Girls' Membership Status in Future Homemakers of America

Area	Members		Previous Members		Non Members	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Coastal N = 758	462	61.0	41	5.4	255	33.6
Piedmont N = 733	460	62.8	20	2.7	253	34.5
Mountain N = 828	331	40.0	27	3.3	470	56.8

Age played a significant role in the FHA membership status of rural girls in the Coastal and Mountain areas of North Carolina, but not in the Piedmont area. Approximately sixty percent of the 13-14 year olds and 15-16 year old girls from the Coastal Plains area held membership in this organization. Nearly forty percent of each of these age groups were members in the Mountain area.

Grade was a function of the membership status of girls in all three areas of the state. Ninth and tenth grade students tended to join FHA at the same approximate rate within each of the three areas.

Membership status was not found to be consistently related to girls' *place of residence*. Membership status among girls from the Mountain area, only, was found to be relative to their residence. A larger percent of girls from farm families, 48.5, were members than those from other places of residence. Girls residing in towns and cities constituted a negligible part of the membership in the Mountain area.

Family size was not associated with FHA membership status in the Coastal Plains and Mountain areas of North Carolina. These variables were related among Piedmont girls. Participation in FHA was more frequent among girls from a one or two child family. Approximately seventy percent of the girls falling into these categories were members. In general, membership in FHA decreased as the size of the family increased.

Whether rural girls from the Coastal Plains and Piedmont areas *lived with both their parents* had no significant bearing upon the frequency of their membership in FHA. These factors were related among youth from the Mountain area; 41.5 percent of Mountain area girls from intact families were members; and 30.1 percent of those from the nonintact family group were members.

Level of living was associated with the FHA membership status of rural girls. Participation was more frequent among those girls from high and middle level of living backgrounds than among others. This observation was most pronounced in the Coastal Plains area where 71.7 percent from the high, 61.2 percent from the middle, and 45.5 percent from the low level of living groups were members.

Membership Status in 4-H Club (Boys): Rural boys were found to join 4-H Clubs less frequently than FFA chapters. Frequency of 4-H membership over the entire state did not vary appreciably. It can be noted in *Table 3* that sixty percent or more of boys from each area had never belonged to the 4-H Club and that frequency of drop out approximated frequency of membership.

Table 3. Boys' Membership Status in 4-H Club

Area	Members		Previous Members		Non Members	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Coastal N = 742	114	15.4	123	16.6	505	68.1
Piedmont N = 767	171	22.3	117	15.3	479	62.5
Mountain N = 672	127	18.9	122	18.2	423	63.0

With the exception of Coastal Plains youth, *age* was not associated with rural boys' 4-H membership status. The highest percent of members in the Coastal Plains area, 21.1, was in the 13-14 year age group. The largest percent of previous members, 21.1, was also observed among this age group.

4-H membership status was found to be related to the *grade level* of rural boys in the Coastal Plains and Mountain areas. Grade was not a function of the membership status of Piedmont boys. A higher percent of ninth grade boys, 18.2, than tenth grade boys, 11.7, participated in 4-H Clubs in the Coastal Plains. A reversal of this trend was noted in the Mountain area where 24.2 percent of the tenth grade and 15.0 percent of the ninth grade were members.

Boys' *residence* was associated with their status in 4-H Clubs. Larger percentages of those from farms than from other residential categories were participants: Coastal Plains, 19.0 percent; Piedmont, 32.8 percent; and Mountain, 22.0 percent.

More 4-H participation among boys from towns and cities was observed in the Mountain area than in other areas of the state: 19.8 percent and 10.5 percent, respectively. The highest percent of drop outs in any category of residence was among town youth in the Coastal Plains, 26.8. Farm boys from the Mountain area, 22.0 percent, constituted the second largest group of drop outs in the organization; 18.0 percent of open country youth in the Piedmont had dropped membership in 4-H Club.

Boys' 4-H status was found to have no association with their *family's size* or *family's intactness*.

Level of living was observed as a significant variable in boys' 4-H membership status in the Coastal Plains and Piedmont areas. Membership was more frequent among those boys representing higher level of living back-

grounds; 11.4 percent of Coastal Plains boys in the low level of living group were members of 4-H as compared to 12.8 percent from the middle and 22.1 percent from the high. Similarly, in the Piedmont area, 15.7 percent falling into the low level of living group, 19.4 percent from the middle group, and 31.7 percent from the high group belonged to 4-H. Although membership was more frequent among boys from high level of living backgrounds, more drop outs were also observed among this group. The membership status of Mountain area youth was not related to their level of living.

Membership Status in 4-H Club (Girls): As shown in *Table 4*, more nonmembers of 4-H Club were observed among rural girls than members. This pattern of 4-H participation paralleled that of rural boys'. Approximately one-half of the girls surveyed in each area had never belonged to this organization; and in the Coastal and Mountain areas, frequency of drop out exceeded frequency of membership.

Table 4. Girls' Membership Status in 4-H Club

Area	Members		Members Previous		Non Members	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Coastal N = 758	132	17.4	216	28.5	410	54.1
Piedmont N = 733	216	29.5	177	24.2	340	46.4
Mountain N = 828	167	20.2	214	25.9	447	54.0

Only in the Coastal Plains was girls' membership status in 4-H related to age. Both members and drop outs were more frequent among 13-14 year old youth; 21.1 percent of this age group were members as compared to 33.3 percent previous members.

Grade played a significant role in the membership status of rural girls in the Coastal and Mountain areas of the state. Membership was more frequent among tenth grade students. Grade was not associated with the membership status of Piedmont girls.

Whether rural girls in North Carolina belonged to 4-H Club was found to be associated with their *place of residence*. Membership was more frequent among girls living on farms and in the open country; the Mountain area being one exception to this pattern. Town girls in the Mountain area con-

tributed the second largest percent of members in that region, 22.4. Farm girls from the Piedmont area contributed the largest percent of members, 38.2. Approximately one-third of the farm girls from the Coastal Plains, one-fifth from the Piedmont, and one-fourth from the Mountain area had dropped membership in 4-H.

Family size, family intactness, and level of living were unrelated to rural girls' status in 4-H Club.

Joint Membership Status in Future Farmers of America and 4-H Clubs: In general, rural boys in North Carolina did not tend to join both FFA and 4-H Club. As noted in *Table 5*, approximately four-fifths of the boys across the state had never held membership in both of these organizations.

Table 5. Boys' Joint Membership Status in 4-H Club and Future Farmers of America

Area	Members		Previous Members		Non Members	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Coastal N = 742	83	11.2	75	10.1	584	78.7
Piedmont N = 767	100	13.0	58	7.6	609	79.4
Mountain N = 672	63	9.4	56	8.3	553	82.3

The *age* of Piedmont and Mountain area youth played a significant part in whether they joined both FFA and 4-H. Age was not significantly related to the joint membership status of boys from the Coastal Plains. In the Piedmont area, simultaneous membership was more frequent among boys in the younger age groups. Joint membership was more frequent among 15-16 year olds in the Mountain area.

With the exception of Mountain area youth, joint membership in FFA and 4-H had little relationship to boys' *grade level*. A larger percent of tenth grade students in the Mountain area, 13.3, than ninth grade students, 6.5, held membership in both FFA and 4-H Club.

Residence was a function of the joint membership status of rural boys. Simultaneous membership in FFA and 4-H was more frequent among youth residing in the more ruralized areas. Larger percentages of farm

boys than other boys participated in both of these organizations: 15.3 percent, Coastal Plains; 25.4 percent, Piedmont; and 15.2 percent, Mountain area.

Boys' joint membership status was not related to their *family's size*. Only in the Piedmont area was the joint membership status of rural boys related to their *family's intactness*. In this area, 13.3 percent of the students living with both parents were members; 10.3 percent of those boys not living with both parents were members.

Joint membership among Coastal and Piedmont boys was related to their *level of living* background. This association was not observed among Mountain area youth. Simultaneous membership was more frequent among boys from the middle and high level of living categories than among those from the low level. In the Coastal Plains, 15.9 percent of boys from the high group held simultaneous membership as compared to 9.8 percent from the middle, and 7.4 percent from the low. A similar observation was made in the Piedmont area where 18.1 percent from the high, 11.7 percent from the middle, and 9.0 percent from the low level of living groups were members.

Joint Membership Status in Future Homemakers of America and 4-H Club: As shown in *Table 6*, approximately seventeen percent of rural girls held simultaneous membership in FHA and 4-H. Joint membership was not frequent among these youth.

Table 6. Girls' Joint Membership Status in 4-H Club and Future Homemakers of America

Area	Members		Previous Members		Non Members	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Coastal N = 758	101	13.3	159	21.0	498	65.7
Piedmont N = 733	154	21.0	104	14.2	475	64.8
Mountain N = 828	93	11.2	73	8.8	662	80.0

Joint membership status was associated with girls' *age* in only one area of the state, the Coastal Plains. Here, frequency of simultaneous membership decreased as the age of girls increased. A larger percent of 15-16 year olds, 22.6, than other age groups, had dropped membership in one or both organizations. Simultaneous membership was more frequent among 13-14 year old girls than among others.

Whether rural girls in the Coastal Plains and Mountain areas held membership in both FHA and 4-H Club was related to their *grade level*. Simultaneous membership was more frequent among ninth grade students than among tenth grade students. No relationship was observed between these variables among Piedmont girls.

Place of residence was a function of the joint membership status of rural girls from the Piedmont and Mountain areas. The membership status of Coastal Plains girls was not associated with their place of residence. The largest percent of Piedmont youth holding simultaneous membership, 28.2, came from farm families. Here, joint membership was more frequent among girls from more rural places of residence. In the Mountain area, a higher percent of simultaneous membership was observed among town youth than among other youth, 14.7.

The number of children in the family was associated with the joint membership status of rural girls in the Coastal Plains area only. Simultaneous membership was usually more frequent among girls from one, two, or three child families.

Family intactness was not related to girls' joint membership status.

The membership status of Coastal Plains and Mountain area girls was related to their *level of living background*. Frequency of simultaneous membership was associated with an increase in level of living. Level of living was of no significance in the joint membership status of Piedmont area girls.

SUMMARY

Future Farmers of America: One-half of the rural boys surveyed were members of the FFA. It was observed that common factors were significantly related to the FFA membership status of boys over the entire state. Most of those joining this organization tended to remain members during the age period investigated. Boys' membership status was significantly related to their age, grade, residence, family size, and level of living. Frequency of membership was somewhat more pronounced among 15-17 year olds than 13-14 year olds, although ninth and tenth grades contributed approximately equal proportions of members. Larger percentages of youth from the more rural areas, specifically boys from families with four, five, or more children, from low level of living backgrounds joined this organization. Family intactness did not characterize the FFA member from the previous member or the nonmember.

Future Homemakers of America: Approximately fifty percent of the girls included in this investigation were FHA members. A paucity of drop outs was noted. Only two variables, grade and level of living, were statewide factors in FHA membership status. Approximately equal percentages of

ninth and tenth grade students participated in this organization; however, larger percentages of girls from high and middle level of living backgrounds were members than those from the lower status. Age characterized membership choices in two of the three areas of the state, but membership was not associated with any particular age group. The FHA membership status of rural girls was not significantly related to their residence or to their family's intactness except in one area of the state. Membership in this area was more frequent among farm girls who lived with both parents. Family size was related to girls' membership status in only one area. Here, membership was more frequent among students from one and two child families.

4-H Club (Boys): Approximately nineteen percent of rural boys held membership in 4-H Club. Drop outs among boys approximately equalled members. Residence was the only variable found to be consistently related to boys' 4-H membership status. Membership was more frequent among farm youth than among others. Membership status in 4-H Club was relative to boys' grade and level of living in two areas of the state. No statewide differences were observed in the number of ninth and tenth grade students participating in this organization, but membership was more frequent among boys from high and middle level of living backgrounds. Age was related to boys' membership status in only one area of the state. Here, membership was more frequent among the 13-14 year old group. Whether rural boys lived with both parents or came from large or small families was not related to their membership status in 4-H Club.

4-H Club (Girls): Twenty-two percent of the rural girls surveyed were members of the 4-H Club. Frequency of drop out usually exceeded frequency of membership. Only one variable, residence, was of statewide consequence in girls' membership status. Participation was more frequent among those from the farm and open country. Grade was a significant variable in two areas of the state. A larger proportion of ninth grade girls than tenth grade students were 4-H participants in these sections. Family size, intactness of family, and level of living were of no statistical significance in the 4-H membership status of rural girls.

Joint Membership in Future Farmers of America and 4-H Club: Eleven percent of rural boys belonged to both FFA and 4-H Club. Frequency of drop out approximated frequency of membership. Only one variable, residence, was consistently related to joint membership status. Simultaneous membership was more frequent among farm boys. Joint membership status was associated with age and level of living in two areas of the state. No statewide trend was observable in the frequency of membership of one age group over another; however, simultaneous membership was more frequent among boys from the high level of living group. Grade and intactness of family were related to joint membership status in at least one area

of the state. Here, membership was more frequent among tenth grade than ninth grade youth. No notable difference was observed between frequency of members from intact families and those from nonintact homes. Family size was of no consequence in the joint membership choices of rural boys.

Joint Membership Status in Future Homemakers of America and 4-H Club: Simultaneous membership in FHA and 4-H Club was held by fifteen percent of the rural girls surveyed. Frequency of drop out in one or both organizations approximated frequency of membership. No variable was observed as a statewide component in girls' joint membership status. Residence, grade, and level of living, statistically significant in two areas of the state, were more constant than other variables. There were no trends observable in frequency of joint membership and place of residence. Joint membership was more frequent among ninth grade students from high and middle level of living backgrounds. Joint membership in FHA and 4-H was associated with age and family size in only one area of the state. Here, membership was more frequent among 13-14 year olds from families with one to three children. Whether rural girls lived with both parents was of no significance in their joint membership status.

DISCUSSION

The frequency with which rural youth chose to join, not to join, or to drop out of particular youth organizations was often related to certain background factors as well as to the nature of the organizations and the geographic locations involved.

It was interesting to note that approximately equal percentages of boys and girls participated in Future Farmers of America and Future Homemakers of America chapters. This similarity in participation among boys and girls also appeared to be typical of 4-H membership and of joint membership in 4-H Club and FFA or FHA chapters.

The nature of the organizations included in this study was probably responsible for youths' residence being more frequently associated with membership status than other variables. It is not surprising that membership in 4-H and FFA was more frequent among farm boys; 4-H Club and FFA chapters being primarily farm oriented. Membership in Future Homemakers of America, designed for homemaking students rather than for those representing specific residential backgrounds, apparently had little relationship to the residence of girls. Place of residence played a significant role in the decisions youth made concerning joint membership in these organizations. Combinations of these memberships appeared to be more often sought by farm youth than by other youth.

Grade level and age generally distinguished members, non-members,

and previous members of FFA, FHA and 4-H Club. These variables were closely related to the drop out rates peculiar to each organization. For example, the high frequency of previous members in 4-H Clubs was more than likely related to a three or four year age eligibility difference between 4-H Clubs and FFA or FHA chapters; many youth discontinuing 4-H membership at the high school level when other new and perhaps more appealing extracurricular activities were available. Differences in school policies controlling the number of club memberships held by students was probably related to the diversity in the age and grade composition of the memberships studied. It is also recognized that some students in these age groups taking agriculture or home economics were more than likely encouraged to hold membership in corresponding clubs.

Level of living, apparently, was quite influential in the membership choices made by rural youth. It appeared that, with the exception of FFA, rural boys and girls from the middle, and particularly the high level of living groups, were more attracted to membership. It is possible that higher prestige values were attached to 4-H and FHA membership than to FFA membership. Following along this pattern somewhat was the observation that joint membership in 4-H and FHA and FFA was more frequent among students in the high level of living group.

Family size appeared to have little bearing on the membership choices of rural youth. This finding substantiated earlier 4-H Club studies. One exception to this pattern was family size and membership status in FFA. Membership in this organization was more frequent among youth from families with four, five, or more children. It is possible that this observation had some relationship to the high frequency of low level of living members also found in this organization.

In no situation was family intactness observed as a statewide component in the membership choices of youth. Intactness of family appeared to be related to membership choices less often than other variables investigated.

In brief, organizational differences were shown through the observations that: Future Farmers of America had low drop out rates at the ninth and tenth grade levels, had particular appeal to boys from large, low level of living farm families. Differences between members, nonmembers, and drop outs according to age and to grade level were evident. Future Homemakers of America also experienced negligible drop out rates at the ninth and tenth grade levels. Grade level, similarly, was associated with decisions to join, not to join, or to drop out of this organization. Girls from high and middle level of living backgrounds were attracted to membership more frequently than girls from a low level of living background. 4-H Club experienced a considerable drop out rate by the ninth grade level and participation among girls and among boys was mainly characterized by a farm background.

It is important that the leaders of Future Farmers of America, Future Homemakers of America, and 4-H Clubs recognize the factors associated with rural youths' membership choices. Without this recognition, organizations will experience difficulty in reaching and in holding the interest of those young persons for whom the organizations were originally designed.

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